RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 9 NO. 13
NOVEMBER 1979
ISSUE NO. 195

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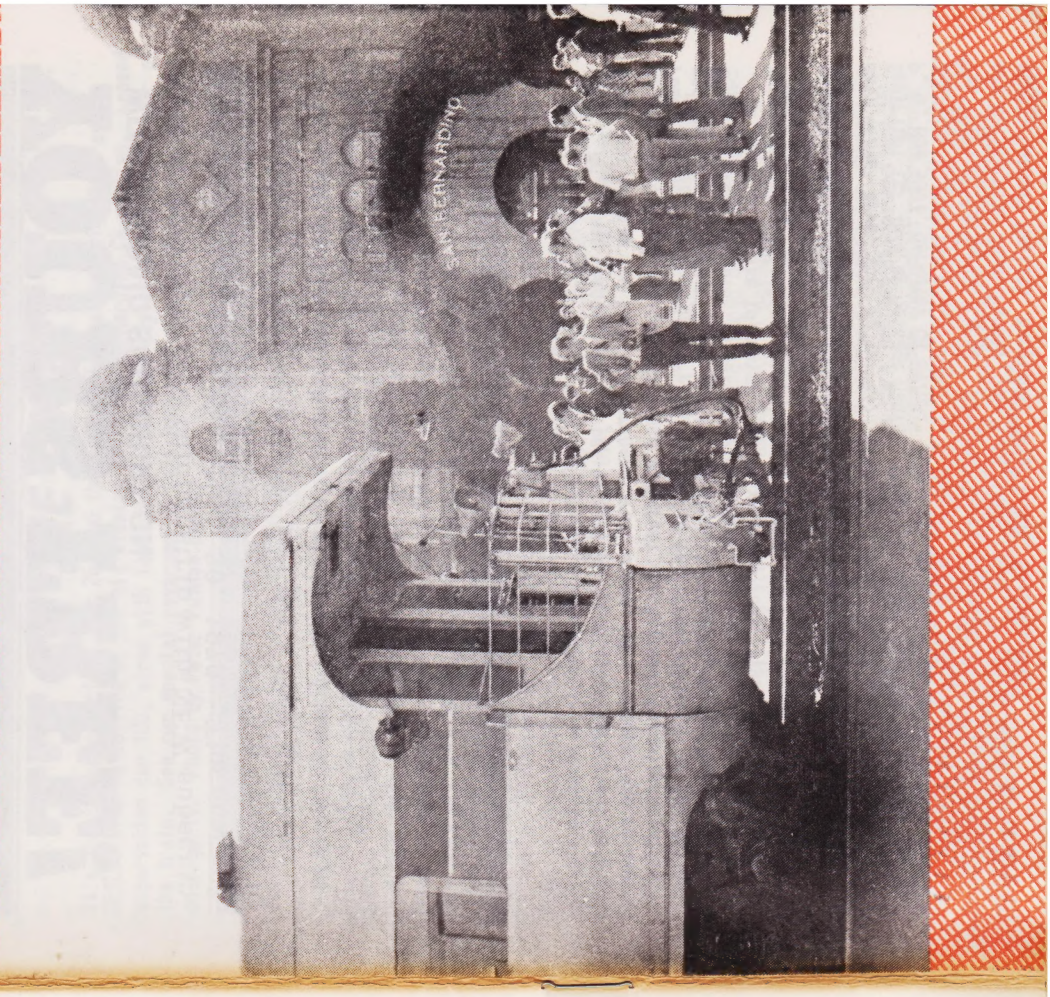

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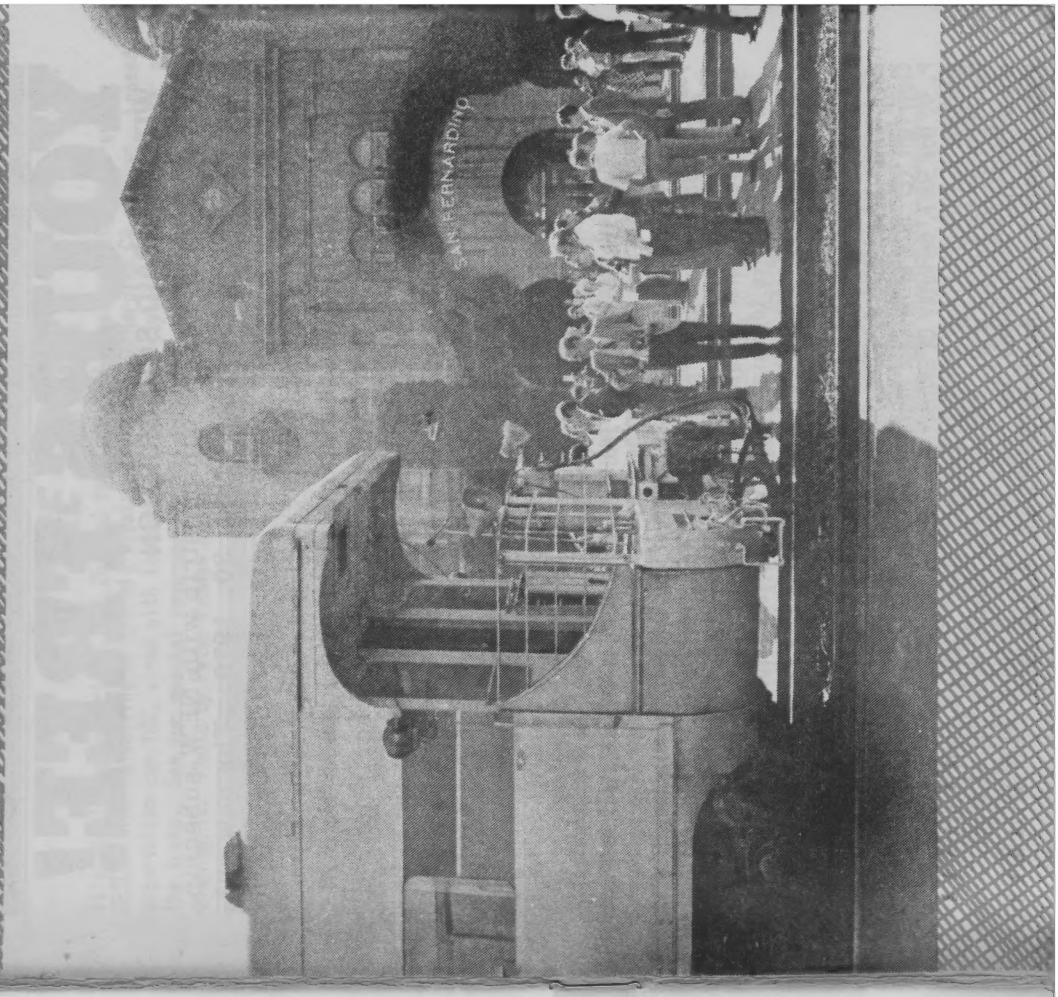

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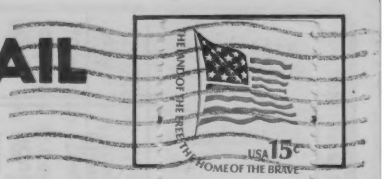

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FIRST CLASS

LETTERS

We have fought the DOT and Amtrak for years, indeed since the early days of 1971, and I would not suggest that we now bury the ax and give up the battle for good rail passenger service, now that we have lost several of our better trains and routes.

What we should do is rethink our goals and come from a slightly different approach. I do not believe there is anyone out there who really cares WHO provides the train service, just so long as we receive good service. Perhaps it is time that we study: (1) Non-profit corporations to "Provide public transportation by means of a system of fixed rail either under contract for the state(s) or as an agency of Amtrak." In other words, form the management company to operate any given route such as "Dixie Flyer Corp.", etc. As a non-profit public transit group there would be federal funds available just as for toll roads. (2) Work

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RTN is offering a free bumperstrip with NEW subscriptions mailed no later than Nov. 30, 1979. The new subscription can be your own or a gift. Here's a chance to do holiday gift shopping early and get a free gift yourself--one red-&-black bumperstrip "I'd Rather Be Riding the Train" with a one-year prepaid subscription. Use coupon on rear cover or your own stationery. Be sure to request the free gift. $12 per year--24 issues. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

NEW STAFF MEMBER JOINS RTN

RTN is pleased to announce that another new correspondent is added to its staff. Mr. James Feeney, working out of East Northport, New York, will help us cover the massive New York and Northeast rail scene. Mr. Feeney, like so many of our other staff and readers, is a member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers and shares our belief that a rail renaissance is in the making and that the country will be better off when it has more and better passenger train service. We wish to welcome Jim aboard.

We would also like to remind you, as we noted last issue, that our regular twice-monthly publication schedule has resumed, so that the deadlines for any submitted materials or advertising are closer together than they have been.

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LETTERS (continued)

to decentralize Amtrak proper, turn Amtrak's Washington DC offices into a national coordination office, and set up two or more regional carriers or "Amtraks" such as Amwest. Each regional carrier could be supported from a central trust fund just like the highways, with the balance of the money coming from the states and fare box. You might be surprised at the great reception this idea has gained in Washington. (3) Work to add a handful of totally new "stub routes" such as Billings, Helena, Sandpoint or Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Springfield and St. Louis, Dallas-Houston; run the PALMETTO to Jacksonville, etc.

This may not be the final answer to the mess, but it might get some wheels rolling and that's what counts.

Robert W. Mann
Newhall, California

ON THE COVER

It's about noon on Friday, Oct 26, and the inaugural press run of Amtrak's new DESERT WIND is waiting at the big mission-style San Bernardino CA station. Leased observation car 100, wired with loudspeakers campaign-style, brings up the rear of the train. See our special coverage of this inaugural run in this issue, starting on page 11. Photo by Peter Putnam Bretz.

AMTRAK BOARD CONSIDERS EQUIPMENT PLANS

At its Oct 31 meeting, Amtrak's Board of Directors approved spending up to $31.6 million to buy 30 new diesel locomotives with head-end electric power. Said Amtrak: "The board's approval will permit Amtrak management to reserve production-line positions for the new locomotives, insuring that Amtrak will have the locomotives as soon as they are needed to power new or converted conventional cars going into service. All Amtrak cars are gradually being converted to all-electric operation, replacing the obsolete use of steam for car heating and in some cases air-conditioning." Describing the new units, Amtrak said: "The new locomotives will be 4-axle, 3000hp units. Acquisition of 30 such locomotives will bring Amtrak's total of diesel-electric units equipped to supply head-end power (HEP) to 193. Amtrak currently projects a requirement of 235 HEP diesels needed for conversion of the entire system, including new trains that are expected to be added as state-supported services."

Besides the locomotive approval, Amtrak's Board heard management plans to spend $27.1 million in the next two fiscal years to "begin the process of compliance with recent handicapped access requirements." Of the total, $15.6 million will be for making some passenger cars accessible to the handicapped by making them "barrier-free". And $11.5 million will be for renovations to passenger stations. Amtrak said that examples of alterations include construction of ramps and lower ticket counters at stations, and on trains the addition of special restrooms and making coaches and sleeping accommodations accessible. The Board took its first action on this plan at its Oct 31 meeting when it approved funding for changes to 72 conventional cars, to cost $6.9 million. The cars include 36 coaches and 36 sleepers, and they will get space to park and secure one wheelchair; a restroom which is accessible to the handicapped; and an orthopedic storage area in each car.

The modified cars will run first on the BROADWAY LIMITED and the LAKE SHORE LIMITED. The alterations will be done concurrently with Amtrak's electrification program at the Beech Grove facility near Indianapolis.

The action of Amtrak's Board is contingent upon Congressional approval of Amtrak's capital funding for fiscal 1980 as contained in the DOT's appropriations bill for that year.

Besides the above equipment plans, Amtrak's Board also approved spending $30.5 million to expand its program of rebuilding and electrifying conventional cars.

This new program, also subject to Congressional appropriations approval, involves 158 cars that should be completed by spring of 1981. The 158 include 72 coaches, 31 sleepers, 16 lounges, 10 diners, 5 slumbercoaches, and 24 baggage and baggage-dormitory cars. The 10 diners will get all-electric kitchens, and the lounges will be fitted with food service bars. Special handicpapped accommodations will be arranged in 17 coaches and 17 sleepers.

Amtrak told RTN that no dome cars are included in the 158, since the cars to be rebuilt are for Eastern trains running out of New York--the Florida trains, the CRESCENT, the BROADWAY and LAKE SHORE. Amtrak said it is storing those domes that are in poorest condition, with no plans to sell them. The discontinuance of domed trains such as the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA will free more domes for use on other conventional trains such as the COAST STARLIGHT and SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, Amtrak said. These latter trains should be running two domes in each consist now, Amtrak said.

Said Amtrak of the electrified equipment, "Passenger reaction to the rebuilt cars has been good since they retain the spaciousness of the famous older cars but have the reliability and comfort of modern mechanical equipment."

★ SOUTHWEST LIMITED DERAILS AGAIN

Just 20 days after its Oct 2 derailment in Lawrence KS, Amtrak's SOUTHWEST LIMITED derailed again on Oct 22, just inside the city limits of Offerle, a town about 28 miles east of Dodge City KS. The 1:10am derailment was much less spectacular than the earlier wreck of the combined eastbound SOUTHWEST LIMITED/LONE STAR. The westbound train 4 was traveling at an unknown speed on 90mph speed limit main line when the last 3 cars of the 11-car train left the tracks, with the rear wheels of the ninth car off the rails, and the two following cars completely off.

The injuries in this wreck were minor. At Dodge City regional hospital 4 passengers were treated and released and one passenger admitted; at Spearville hospital two passengers were admitted. The last 3 cars, all sleepers, were cut off from the train and passengers shifted into coaches ahead for continuation of the journey, which eventually ended in Chicago at 9:46pm, 6 hours, 41 minutes late. (The westbound #3 was also delayed by the wreck, reported at Las Vegas NM running 9 hours, 12 minutes behind schedule.)

Santa Fe Railway spokesmen said the wreck might have been caused by a separation of rails due to a failure in an angle bar.

The consist of the derailed train was engines 518, 517, 536 (SDP's); cars 1256 & 1264 (baggage), dorm 9994, coaches 9904, 9962, 9912, low-level diner 8075, dome lounge 9350, and sleepers 2212 "Indian Falls", 2762 "Palm View", and 2756 "Palm Path".

NEW YORK STATE voters on Nov 6 approved the $400 million Energy Conservation Through Improved Transportation Bond Act. The Act was described in detail in the last issue of RTN. In New Jersey, approval was also given by voters for a bond issue totalling $475 million for improving and rehabilitating transportation facilities. Of the total, $150 million will go towards mass transit.

LAKE SHORE LIMITED has begun using the Post Road "short cut" on its Boston-Albany leg. Effective with the Oct 28 timetable, the Boston section leaves Boston at 4:40pm, 20 minutes later than before, with Chicago arrival the same, 3:10pm. The train arrives in Boston 25 minutes earlier than before, at 3:20pm. However, the eastbound New York section has its running time lengthened by 10 minutes. Amtrak rebuilt the 12.6 miles of track between Post Road and Rensselaer NY under a $4.1 million capital grant from the Federal Government. Penn Central had abandoned the segment in 1972 and the track was removed.

ABOARD AN AMTRAK GHOST TRAIN

by Peter Putnam Bretz

On October 1 I was in Duluth awaiting boarding of the NORTH STAR for Chicago when I became fully aware of Amtrak's intention to run "ghost trains"--that is, no timetable mention nor appearance in the computer, but running nevertheless.

The injunction by Wichita Judge Thies to keep three of Amtrak's "hit list" trains going was, by now, two-day-old news. What was newly learned was that Amtrak was complaining that it didn't want to put the trains back. "We've shuffled cars around already and re-assigned them"; "We've closed all the stations on the HIAWATHA route"; "The computer has been deprogrammed." So Amtrak elected to send out the first ghost train, the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA running as an extra, with a coaches-only consist.

We passed the HIAWATHA just west of Minneapolis that evening. I looked from my window in electrified sleeper "Pacific Hills" and saw one locomotive, two conventional coaches and a food-service car. However, the rear car was parlor-dome-lounge-observation 9331 "Silver Veranda"; a unique consist--but all the way to Seattle?

In Chicago next morning things were even more up in the air. On Oct 1 the EMPIRE BUILDER had left Seattle on its new schedule--eastbound Mon-Thur-Sat; and the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA departed on its old schedule--Mon-Wed-Fri. Hence two transcons leaving within 20 minutes of each other! Did they meet up at Spokane? Did they combine forces, only to split again at Sandpoint?

The big news was this morning's wreck of the SOUTHWEST LIMITED/LONE STAR running on the LONE STAR's old route via Topeka, with that strange story of the engineer being allowed to run over unfamiliar track. The LONE STAR was now being combined with #3 and #4 north of Newton, Kansas. It carried coaches only, with food-service car to Houston; all unreserved, too.

My plans called for traveling Chicago-Houston as well, but I was booked on the INTER-AMERICAN to Ft. Worth in a sleeper, then coach to San Antonio, where I would catch a plane to Houston and eventually board the SUNSET LIMITED. No clerk knew anything for certain. I had heard that the FLORIDIAN was running with a full consist--sleepers and all. No sign of it in the computer. I walked out to greet the last northbound full-service FLORIDIAN which had left Miami two days before. Engines 301 and 638 were on the head end; then dorm, sleepers, diner, lounge, coaches, and on the rear was private car "Hampton Roads" from the Gold Coast Chapter NRHS. Its large square drumhead read "ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL--FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED."

I talked with more clerks, both in person and by phone; Amtrak lounge personnel; and station services people. No one really knew what was happening and no one was willing to make any decisions.

Yesterday's INTER-AMERICAN had gone out with a full-service conventional diner and sleeper to be switched out at Temple and then to go on their own to Houston. But when it got to Ft. Worth there was no extra engine, so the cars were switched out there. No, I still could not make reservations for tonight's LONE STAR even if I'd wanted to.

I left Chicago Oct 2 at 11:15am on the daily INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, despite notices posted that #21 and #22 would cease daily operation on Oct 1. We had engine 320, Amdinette 20200, Amcoaches 21847 & 21873, my sleeper "Pine Shore", and deadheading 21864. No one knew how far this sleeper was going to go. The porter thought he was going to Houston. We wouldn't know until we got to Texas. My original ticket read Chicago-Ft. Worth, but I had been able to secure reservations to Houston, tho not able to buy the extra ticket.

After a smooth ride on the MoPac, I was awakened just as we left Dallas. We reached Ft. Worth about 20min early. No, we learned, the sleeper was not going

to Houston--it was being uncoupled here, to go north this evening on #22. The timetable showed a connection, a train 23 between Temple and Houston. Was that running? "No, not today. Just #15 and 16. The LONE STAR is running northbound on #24's schedule, however." Leaving at 8:55am from Houston, that would bring #16 into Temple at 1:25pm, just in time to meet #22 coming in from San Antonio. The southbound LONE STAR was operating--on its old schedule--but running an hour late.

At 1pm on a hot, hot Wednesday I dragged myself back to the Ft. Worth station to wait another hour for #15. It finally arrived with engine 525 leading; no baggage; sleeper "Star Range"; lounge-dorm 3381 "Concho"; and coaches 5699, 5606 and 5664. No hi-levels, no Dallas equipment. Just about that time, the westbound connection from Dallas arrived with one hi-level coach. It was running on the old schedule, whereas its northbound connection was on the new schedule, over an hour later. I managed to get a space in the sleeper, and we pulled out after only 10mins at the station, but then sat at the T&P crossing 45mins for a freight.

Down the line, at Rio Vista, just south of Cleburn, we took siding. Soon, here comes the lonesome LONE STAR. It streaks by with two hi-level coaches and a 3300-series lounge car. That was it. Moments later--the block signal was still yellow --here comes #22 rolling north right on time with its Amfleet cars. Quite a sight to see two Amtrak shorty-type trains out here in the middle of noplace.

The lounge attendant in "Concho" was helpful, but there was no hot food. He was even out of coffee. I still had my SUNSET to catch in Houston. Normally #1 runs 5 to 7 hours late due to SP dealings in Louisiana, but today, wouldn't you know, there was a wreck and so passengers were being bused to Houston.

The law applies: a late train always gets later. Altho we had a leeway of two hours and 10 minutes plus 15 minutes of padding in the schedule, we had already lost an hour, and there was much slow running. And we went into the hole for freight trains (after all, we were an "extra"--no need to keep us on schedule). The conductor "cheered" us by saying that yesterday the SP stabbed us one hour at Rosenburg. Oh me, oh my! It was well past 10pm when we hit West Junction, and double track--meaning #1 could not pass us anytime, and it was two days until the next train!

We finally staggered into the station at 10:40pm, and the SUNSET was still sitting there! It seems one of the buses had gotten lost at Beaumont and couldn't find the station. As it was, just 5 minutes after our arrival, my SUNSET was pulling out. The hurry was pointless, tho, for back at West Junction #1 stopped and waited over an hour for an SP freight! We finally arrived in Los Angeles over three hours late.

Now the LONE STAR and other Amtrak ghost trains are gone. Will there be a resurrection? Time will tell.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

Read Down	M-F between	Read Up	Reg. One-Way	12-Ride	46-Ride
5:05p 5:35p	Chicago	7:10a 7:50a			
5:50p 6:19p	Gary (5th & Chase)	6:27a 6:58a	$2.05	$24.50	$69.00
5:56p 6:23p	Gary (Broadway)	6:22a 6:53a	2.40	28.50	70.00
6.20p 6 45p	Valparaiso	6:00a 6:35a	3.45	41.00	90.00

Fares and schedules subject to change; service available between any two stations along route.

Union Station, 210 S. Canal St., Chicago/Amtrak City Ticket Office, 80 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago/Call 786-1333. Elsewhere in Illinois, call toll-free 800-972-9147.

AMTRAK TOOK OVER operation of the Chicago-Valparaiso IN commuter trains from Conrail effective Oct 29, and in Chicago newspapers it published the above schedules and fares, under the heading "Amtrak's made it our job to get you to your job." Amtrak said it was starting to make commuting more of a pleasure by "bringing back the smoother, more reliable bi-levels." The trains are numbered 321-2-3-4 and are listed in the Oct 28 nationwide timetable. (They were also shown in the Oct 1-27 timetable as tentative.)

A STREETCAR LINE is proposed for Chico, California, and has the approval of Caltrans and the backing of over 1000 citizens who signs petitions. But the Public Utilities Commission opposes the idea as too expensive. Last month they visited the proposed Esplanade location and turned thumbs down. The newspaper Chico Enterprise-Record continues to editorialize in support of the plan.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION to NY City's transit financial woes is outlined in a new book, "The Financial Outlook for the New York City Transit Authority" by Edward S. Seeley Jr. It's available at $3.25 each from City Almanac, 66 Fifth Ave, NYC NY 10011.

BART'S LABOR DISPUTE continues, and so does its reduced service run by supervisory personnel. On Nov 8 BART said it would expand its reduced service on Nov 19 so that trains will operate to all stations except Daly City and the Balboa Park station in San Francisco. Service will continue to be only on weekdays from 6am to 6pm.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE has released a report which says that the cost of making transit stations and vehicles accessible to the handicapped will run $6.8 billion over the next 30 years, an amount equal to $38 per trip for every handicapped rider.

WALL STREET JOURNAL, discussing the transportation bond proposals in New York and New Jersey, said Oct 19 that public transit systems were not ready for the pressure of the gasoline shortage last summer because of the shortage of good equipment. Many people were turned off of public transit when they tried to use it then.

DIAL-A-RIDE bus service began in Iosco County, Michigan, on Oct 15. The service is available five days a week, and is available from 6am to 6pm on a same-day basis in densely populated areas, and on a 24-hour reservation basis elsewhere. The service is a one-year demonstration project funded by a $325,500 grant from the Michigan Transportation Commission.

TORONTO'S GO TRANSIT system began publication of times on the 24-hour clock system starting with the Oct 28 semi-annual revised timetables.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP DATA - AUGUST

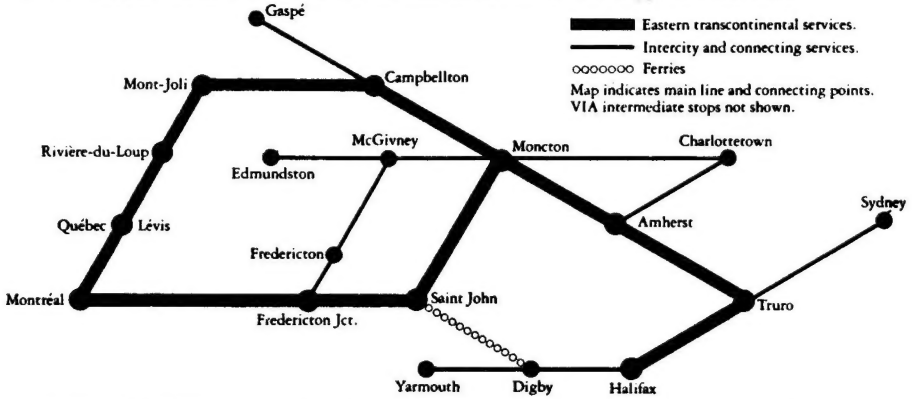
Metroliners	141,677	Washington-Montreal	45,185
NE Corr Conventional	505,232	New York-Florida	88,561
New Haven-Springfld	31,334	Chicago-NY/Washington	31,184
NY-Philadelphia	201,871	Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	18,896
Phila-Harrisburg	91,947	Kansas City-NY/DC	28,610
NY-Harrisburg	16,074	Chicago-Seattle (N)	22,118
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	74,065	Chicago-Seattle (S)	24,253
Chicago-St. Louis	21,378	Chicago-San Francisco	34,323
Chicago-Milwaukee	32,932	Chicago-Los Angeles	38,683
Chicago-Detroit	51,400	Chicago-Houston	32,135
Chicago-Carbondale	16,279	Chicago-New Orleans	29,528
Chicago-Quincy	8,617	Chicago-Florida	20,462
L.A.-San Diego	143,209	Chicago-Laredo	26,548
Seattle-Portland	10,775	L.A.-New Orleans	11,939
Seattle-Vancouver	8,832	L.A.-Seattle	63,005
Washington-Cincinnati	8,062	Chicago-NY/Boston	37,298
Wash.-Martinsburg	22,229	Boston-Newport News	68,689
Oakland-Bakersfield	11,366	New York-Savannah	53,797
New York-Montreal	15,950	Seattle-Salt Lake	17,061
Chicago-Port Huron	11,745	Boston-Tri-State	8,627
Chicago-Dubuque	7,160	NY-New Orleans	30,796
St. Paul-Duluth	8,846	Special trains	1,206

Amtrak released these ridership figures on Oct 23. They show that August was the third consecutive month of over two million ridership.

Every route showed an increase over last year, with these exceptions: NY-Harrisburg, Seattle-Portland, Seattle-Vancouver, St. Paul-Duluth, and the EMPIRE BUILDER. Total ridership was 2,173,884--up from 1,796,852 in Aug 1978 (up 21%). Short distance was up 29.3% & NE Corridor up 12.6.

RAIL CANADA

THE WITHDRAWN TIMETABLE: VIA Rail Canada issued a systemwide timetable for the period Oct 28-Feb 2, but no sooner was it out than it had to be withdrawn and completely reprinted because of major changes in service. For this timetable period, VIA was implementing the CTC's Final Plan for transcon services, with one train originating in Montreal and one in Toronto. The two would consolidate at Sudbury, running together to Winnipeg, where they would become two trains--one for the north (CN) route and one for the south (CP) route to Vancouver. Passengers for the CN route would have to change trains in Winnipeg in either direction. A tri-weekly train between Capreol and Winnipeg would serve the Northern Ontario line and connect with the transcons in Winnipeg. But Transport 2000 complained to the CTC about these two service inadequacies, and VIA agreed to run thru sleeping cars so first class passengers need not change trains in Winnipeg. The CTC wouldn't alter the tri-weekly Capreol run but Transport 2000 and a woman in Sioux Lookout with an 800-signature petition prevailed upon Transport Minister Mazankowski to order the train to run six times weekly (daily except Tuesday). The order came on Oct 25, precipitating the rush to reprint schedules. The altered timetable has changes in tables 7, 8, 14, 24, 39, 44A and 45. The orange-and-black timetable is identified by "Revised" printed on the cover. A sheet of sample fares effective Nov 19 was inserted in the copy we received.



VIA'S NEW PATTERN of service to the Maritime Provinces is shown in the above diagram published in newspapers with the Oct 28 service changes. As outlined in RTN previously, two full-service trains, the ATLANTIC and the OCEAN, serve the Montreal-Halifax run via two routes. The ATLANTIC leaves at 6:30pm daily via Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton. The OCEAN leaves at 11:40pm and runs via Campbellton, Moncton. Passengers to Gaspe take the OCEAN to Matapedia and connect with train 118, Matapedia-Gaspe. There is a new day train, the domeliner LE SAINT-LAURENT, trains 18 & 19, between Montreal and Mont-Joli, leaving Montreal at 2pm daily. VIA said that altho the SCOTIAN is gone, service between Halifax/Moncton and Montreal is significantly improved. Westbound connections from the OCEAN are made with train 63, a Rapido, to Toronto. VIA does not plan for passengers connecting with the CANADIAN to use the OCEAN, but rather the ATLANTIC. The ATLANTIC now operates from Montreal Central Station, and is a full-service train. VIA noted that its new service pattern provides for the first time ever, thru train service between Saint John, N.B. and Halifax on convenient schedules. Thru service on the ATLANTIC is supplemented by other services that require a change in Moncton. Said VIA, "The most interesting service changes are those within the Atlantic Region itself, which will now enjoy an integrated network serving Halifax, Sydney, Saint John N.B./Fredericton Jct., Moncton, Campbellton, Edmundston and Prince Edward Island. The possibilities for more convenient travel between all points served in this area will be greatly enhanced, VIA boasted.

THE LAST RUNS of the Ste-Foy-Edmonston train took place Oct 27, with Transport 2000 Quebec Secretary Guy Chartrand aboard. The railiner carried a banner on the front. It was the last run for the train, for the engineer and the conductor as well, and there wasn't a dry eye on the train at the end of the run. The 65 people aboard were reported pretty angry at the CTC for the discontinuance approval. Many now have no regular public transportation; for others, the bus ride will be longer than the train and not dependable in winter. This case is again being reviewed by the CTC, as VIA was supposed to make a bus connection with Voyageur Bus, using LE ST-LAURENT. But Voyageur would not cooperate, and so there is no bus connection.

RUMOUR HAS IT that VIA Rail will run a day train on the route of the CANADIAN on CP Calgary-Vancouver. To accommodate Regina, times were changed westbound with the VIA takeover, so one really sees little of the Rockies that one pays to see westbound. The new train would run at "viewing times" from Calgary, and people could stop over there and pick up the train the following morning. The train would take pressure off the CANADIAN, now crowded with short-haul travelers, skiers, tourists, etc.

A FARE INCREASE on VIA may be on the say--perhaps 5%. Voyageur Bus reportedly would like to see it higher. VIA is also expected to raise minimum fares from $4 to perhaps $5 or more. The Federal Court says the CTC has no jurisdiction over minimum fares unless discrimination can be proven.

RAIL CONSUMER GROUP Transport 2000 Canada held its annual meeting in Montreal on Oct 20. Featured speaker was VIA's Leo Moisan (see QUOTES, below). Harry Gow has agreed to stay on as T2000 executive for another year. Transport 2000's treasury is getting very low because of the cost of much recent work on passenger train cases, and it would welcome donations. Mark your check "donation" and send to Transport 2000, Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1N 8V3.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION will hold hearings on passenger train service between Saskatoon and The Pas as follows: The Pas, 81 Edwards Ave., Nov 28 at 9am; Saskatoon, 90 22nd St. East, Dec 11 at 10am.

CONRAIL ABANDONED THE line from St. Thomas, Ont. to Windsor, but three days later CTC inspectors showed up and ordered the line reopened.

CTC WILL HOLD hearings (no dates given) in Northern Ontario on the Capreol-Winnipeg service and whether it should run daily.

A DECISION ON what to do with the (Toronto) Pickering Airport site should come from Transport Minister Mazankowski by mid-November.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"What so offends this nation's millions of citizens are insults to their common sense such as programs where policies become more important than quality.

"Everyone riding the doomed (NORTH COAST) HIAWATHA could explain why Washington has become more the butt of bad jokes than a center of respect. The arguments for expanded, rather than reduced, passenger-train service are strong nationally, but on this particular day on this particular train, riders and crew alike shared a sense of bemused yet bitter frustration that those who make decisions are so out of touch that they don't even know how out of touch they are."

--Phil Primack in New York Times, Oct 22.

"Our new reservations system RESERVIA... is being designed with intermodality in mind. ... The new system comes on stream in March of next year and will eventually enable Canadians to make coincidental train, plane, rent-a-car, hotel, motel, ferry and--hopefully at some time in the future--bus reservations. We will be the first country in the world to have a nationwide intermodal reservation system."

--VIA Rail Canada V.P. J. L. Moisan in address to Transport 2000 Canada annual general meeting, Montreal, Oct 20.

SAYING GOODBYE TO THE HILLTOPPER

by R. Lyle Key, Jr.

It was still awfully dark in the morning in Catlettsburg, Kentucky when the HILLTOPPER arrived from the yard with engine 266, Amcafe 20007, and Amcoach 21807. This short train was quite ample for the three of us who boarded this mid-September morning, but business would improve as we got further east.

We departed Tri-State nine minutes late at 5:42am, and before long, circular color/position signals showed that we were on N&W iron. I wish that I could have made the trip behind N&W's famous J class 4-8-4's on the POWHATAN ARROW, but was quite thankful to be getting to ride any passenger train over the Norfolk & Western. The scenery thru "Wild and Wonderful" West Virginia is indeed spectacular, and one has to admire the men who laid this line thru the mountains. The railroad seems to be a never-ending succession of reverse curves, and one can appreciate why the HILLTOPPER is not one of Amtrak's swiftest trains. Long tunnels are also fairly common, and a good many slide fences guard the right-of-way in the numerous deep cuts we encountered.

Breakfast was a disappointment. Amfleet food service cars are normally stocked with good breakfast sandwiches similar to McDonald's "Egg McMuffin" but the only thing available on the HILLTOPPER was Danish pastries.

After awhile one gets the impression that N&W doesn't haul any freight other than coal, but at Keystone, West Virginia we overtook and slowly passed a long eastbound merchandise train. We were 32 minutes late at Welch, but back on schedule by the time we reached Bluefield. In Virginia the train began to make better time, since the line thru the New River valley was much less curvey.

At lunchtime I finally had an enjoyable Ammeal. The Food Service Attendant recommended the ham and cheese, and it was excellent. While it was warming in the microwave oven, he mentioned that he had been on the HILLTOPPER for three years--since it had started running--and he was not looking forward to working in the North-east Corridor. "You don't get many tips on this train, but the people are really nice, just good home folks. They even do things like bring me vegetables from their gardens. I'm sure going to miss this run."

Just west of Roanoke we passed the Roanoke NRHS Chapter's equipment which includes a CITY OF NEW ORLEANS observation lounge that has been repainted in N&W's Tuscan red and gold. Just east of the Roanoke station we passed some genuine N&W passenger cars which have presumably been retained by the railroad for company specials.

We met the westbound HILLTOPPER at 3:25pm just west of Lynchburg. He was on time and was also a one-engine, two-car train. As we proceeded east the topography flattened out and the view changed to more routine farms and woodlands. For dinner, I stuck with a winner and enjoyed another ham and cheese sandwich.

The other two Catlettsburg passengers had detrained at Welch WV and Roanoke, but others had boarded, and by the time we reached Petersburg ridership was up to 30. We pulled into Petersburg three minutes hot at 6:12pm, and an Amtrak-chartered bus was on hand to take passengers to Suffolk, Portsmouth, and Norfolk. Eight passengers made the transfer to the big "Silver Eagle"-type bus. The bus connection is, of course, operated in lieu of the rail service that went directly to Norfolk prior to the HILLTOPPER's route inauguration.

We departed Petersburg on time at 6:15pm, eased around a long left-hand curve, and headed slowly north on a connecting track that led to the SCL main line. At 6:28 the HILLTOPPER pulled to a stop by SCL's double track main, and at 6:30 we proceeded onto the northbound track for our run to Richmond. After a day of fairly slow running, it was really exhilirating to sail along at 80 over SCL's high speed track.. The sun was setting on Virginia as we rolled over the James River, and in a few days it would set for the last time on Amtrak's HILLTOPPER.

Number 66 pulled into Richmond at 7:04pm, one minute early, and I stepped off to complete my trip on this doomed train.

AMTRAK INTRODUCES THE

by Peter Putnam Bretz

Amtrak began its new Los Angeles-Las Vegas-Ogden service on Oct 28, and on Oct 26-27 it ran an inaugural press run eastbound over the route, taking two days to reach Ogden, with an overnight in Las Vegas.

Las Vegas casino owners had long wanted train service from L.A., and three attempts had been made since the May 1 discontinuance of the Union Pacific's privately-operated service over the route. A LAS VEGAS FUN TRAIN, running with a package deal similar to the RENO FUN TRAIN, had been tried for the winter season of 1971, but it did not last for a second season. In Sep 1974 the LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN had run twice-weekly, arranged by a Los Angeles promoter, but it too was discontinued after a few months. The LAS VEGAS LIMITED, partially supported by the state of Nevada, started operation in May, 1976 and ceased the following August. Now in Oct 1979, following the legislative work of Nevada Senator Howard Cannon, a train to Las Vegas--this time running thru to Ogden as a permanent train in the Amtrak system--makes its debut.

Below, RTN's Peter Putnam Bretz reports on the inaugural press run.

The Winning Way to Travel.

It's 8:15am at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal on Friday, Oct 26. The consist of the press run DESERT WIND is waiting: engines 214 and 202; baggage car 1244, Amcoach 21269, Amdinette 20232, Amcoaches 21253 and 21854, Amdinette 20231, Amcoach 21825, and open-platform observation car 100 leased from Great Western Tours for the occasion. Two loudspeakers are hooked up on the car's observation railing and a podium is set nearby on the station platform.

The pre-inaugural program is about to begin. At 9am, Amtrak's Art Lloyd takes the microphone and thanks everyone for showing up. "...I can assure you that we

MOMENT OF IMPACT: Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco christens the new train at the Los Angeles ceremony. Photo by Peter Bretz.

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The pre-inaugural program is about to begin. At 9am, Amtrak's Art Lloyd takes the microphone and thanks everyone for showing up. "...I can assure you that we

MOMENT OF IMPACT: Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco christens the new train at the Los Angeles ceremony. Photo by Peter Bretz.

are going to continue running trains and more trains as the need for them has been demonstrated. Today, we will launch a new train, a new route... We are going back into a service that is needed..."

Originally scheduled to appear here was Amtrak's Clark Tyler, but instead Alan Boyd himself is on hand. Art Lloyd introduces Mr. Boyd, who says his role here is small and ceremonial. "Amtrak is 8½ years old now and has had eight years of annual crises. This year, Amtrak is stabilized." Mr. Boyd stands tall in a blue pin-striped suit. His voice is deep and booming. "...we will continue to grow and offer more and better service to the traveling public... Many people think that all we're doing is providing greater opportunity for those who have a dire need to get to Las Vegas... yet, we are also providing another route from Chicago to Los Angeles... I think it is going to be a major branch of the Amtrak tree."

There are words also from Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco, from San Francisco NARP director Bob Glover, from BART chairman and NARP director John Kirkwood, and George Falcon comes forward to present a Golden Spike award to Senator Cannon, who couldn't be present. Alan Boyd accepts the award on the Senator's behalf. Also introduced are famed railfan E. M. Frimbo, new Amtrak public affairs director Carole Foryst, food chef Dave Laughlin, new division manager Dave Michaels, sales

TV reporter interviews Amtrak President Alan Boyd as Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco looks on. Photo by Paul Rayton.

director Jack Gordon, the UP's Larry Kirkaby, a Las Vegas city councilman, and others. Almost 100 people flew in from Las Vegas for the ceremony.

Now it's time to christen the new train, and Adriana Gianturco breaks the bottle of champagne against the coupler of car 100. Ten minutes later, we're all aboard and on our way.

At Pasadena, the three A's (Art, Alan, and Adriana) are on the rear platform making the same little speeches. We leave Pasadena at 10:20am, the first of five stops on today's schedule. The Las Vegas Association is giving out plaques to each city along the way. But Pasadena's went to one of the city motorcycle patrolmen, as no city official was on hand.

We roll thru the Pasadena subway. The train goes slowly and stops. An announcement on the P.A. says that we are "dogging it" so as not to arrive early in Pomona, our stop scheduled for 10:50. A request is made that the last two Amtrak cars be kept clean, as they are for display purposes at each stop. Indeed, the Amdinette has plastic-encased food samples to inspect, as well as tables filled with Amtrak

hats and "We've been working on the railroad" buttons.

At Pomona the myriad people who came to greet the train don't wait for the speeches--they all want to go thru and check out the equipment. Alan Boyd gets off and says hello to some locals.

An hour later at San Bernardino Art Lloyd tells the crowd that the Amfleet cars on the DESERT WIND are only temporary--that new Superliners are slated for next year. Santa Fe and UP officials are acknowledged. Alan Boyd says he is very confident of the future of rail passenger service. It's a bright, sunny day, and a couple of hundred people file thru the train. Art is anxious to leave so as not to hold up the westbound SOUTHWEST LIMITED, which is waiting outside town. We leave at 12:10, right on our schedule. We stand outside on the open platform and watch No. 3 pass, running over six hours late. There is an open-platform car on its rear also.

We ascend Cajon Pass on the steep westbound track. Dignitaries crowd the rear platform. Henry Luna of Great Western Tours tells us about this car #100. It was built by Pullman-Standard for the C&NW, and was named "Imperial Leaf." Autoliner Corp. converted it from a 4-4-2 into a business-type car.

Champagne, hors d'oeuvres and Aplets and Cotlets are served. The camera crew from Channel 13, Las Vegas crowds past and goes outside as we clear the summit at

The DESERT WIND on its press run goes slowly leaving Pasadena, running in the median strip of the Foothill Freeway, to avoid gaining time. Paul Rayton photo.

12:40pm. We drift into conversation with Adriana Gianturco. She says that she knew nothing about railroading when she took office, but now calls herself a "rail enthusiast."

Someone passes thru, giving out yellow DESERT WIND T-shirts. Art Lloyd points out the new Santa Fe freight yard near Barstow. We arrive at the station at 1:54 pm. There is much milling about and picture-taking. Mayor Bernard Keller of Barstow says "We're all proud to have this train here thru Barstow..."

On the Union Pacific Railroad now, we head for Nevada. Why didn't Amtrak route the DESERT WIND on the UP out of L.A.? The answer is that the stations at East Los Angeles and Riverside would have to be refurbished, and a new one built at Pomona (the UP tore down their 1962 structure in 1974). Double utilization of agents on the Santa Fe line was deemed cheaper and better.

As the train threads its way thru beautiful Afton Canyon, we're ushered into drawing room B for an interview with Alan Boyd. Carole Foryst, Art and Adriana look on. We ask Mr. Boyd is he is a little tired right now of having everyone

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The first revenue run of the DESERT WIND, on Oct 28, runs thru the Highland Park section of L.A., heading for Pasadena. Photo by Paul Rayton.

Saturday morning. The new station in the hotel annex is very nice and somehow different--perhaps it is the chairs: rows of brown plush-like material with metal frames, somewhat like lounge car chairs. And there are a few super-comfortable easy chairs scattered about. Outside, Las Vegas show girls in purple mini-skirts and the band from Las Vegas High School, in crimson and black uniforms, are ready for today's opening ceremony. A badly-placed P.A. system makes the speeches a little hard to hear, but a spirit of enthusiasm prevails.

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We're off on time at 9am, and proceed up the UP's middle-of-nowhere route to Salt Lake City, However, Meadow Valley Wash provides interesting scenery, what with double-wide tunnels and twists and turns of track.

There is a commotion on the back platform as we near Caliente (we are not scheduled to stop). Everyone is pointing and taking pictures. Some local residents are at trackside carrying signs that read "WE ARE TAXPAYERS, TOO. CALIENTE NEEDS AMTRACK (sic)". We are later told that Delta would make a better stop.

We pour a cup of coffee and chat with E. M. Frimbo. He has recently completed his 2,569,000th mile of rail travel. Would he do it all over again, if given the chance? "Yes, of course I would," he ejects without a second's hesitation, "every bit." Just then Art Lloyd comes on the P.A. to ask that the two rear display Amfleet cars be vacated during the stop at Milford.

We arrive at 3:07pm to find the whole town is out. Milford High School's band is playing the opening theme from "Also Sprach Zarathustra". Mayor Roy Young makes appropriate comments from the rear platform. Then, everyone files thru the display section and gets Amtrak hats and puts on the big blue buttons. We pull out at 3:38.

The DESERT WIND, traveling the legendary rails of the CITY OF LOS ANGELES, the CHALLENGER, the CITY OF ST. LOUIS, the UTAHAN, the PONY EXPRESS, rolls thru Delta at about 4:40pm, but nobody notices our passing. There are green fields and snow-covered mountains in the distance.

Amtrak tries to provide a nice example of an Amsupper for all of us, but trouble with the microwaves in both Amdinettes delays serving. But most of us get fed before our 6:50pm arrival in Salt Lake City.

Again, plenty of people in Salt Lake have turned out to see the train. It's puzzling that folks want to see Amfleet cars, as the PIONEER, whose equipment is sitting nearby, has carried Amfleet since its inception. We say goodbye to E. M. Frimbo here, and are sad to see him go. Speeches commence at the back platform. Utah Governor Scott Mathison, an ex-UP man, is introduced. He says we are all looking forward to making trips on the train. Congressman Gunn McKay speaks. Senator Thorp Waddingham puts in a plug for a stop and Delta. Festivities over, we leave Salt Lake at 7:15pm and arrive in Ogden at 8:06pm.

The program takes place inside the Ogden station. The T. H. Bell Junior High School band blasts forth in the echoing structure. Gunn McKay, who rode up the 36 miles from Salt Lake, is enthusiastically greeted. The Mayor of Ogden talks about the importance of railroad jobs. Murray Moler, editor of the Ogden Standard-Examiner (the driving force behind the 1969 Promontory Celebration) says he's glad that Ogden is now Junction City, USA again, with the missing link in place. Speeches over, the band strikes up again, plays two more tunes, then packs up and leaves. It becomes quiet. Soon, only those of us waiting for train 5 are left.

At 1:00am the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR pulls in, running late. All three trains are now side-by-side in the station: #5, #26, and the new #36. The observation car is switched to #5 to deadhead to Oakland. We board our sleeper and go, but we will be back. By all indications, the opinion is that the DESERT WIND will be very popular indeed.

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Amtrak tries to provide a nice example of an Amsupper for all of us, but trouble with the microwaves in both Amdinettes delays serving. But most of us get fed before our 6:50pm arrival in Salt Lake City.

Again, plenty of people in Salt Lake have turned out to see the train. It's puzzling that folks want to see Amfleet cars, as the PIONEER, whose equipment is sitting nearby, has carried Amfleet since its inception. We say goodbye to E. M. Frimbo here, and are sad to see him go. Speeches commence at the back platform. Utah Governor Scott Mathison, an ex-UP man, is introduced. He says we are all looking forward to making trips on the train. Congressman Gunn McKay speaks. Senator Thorp Waddingham puts in a plug for a stop and Delta. Festivities over, we leave Salt Lake at 7:15pm and arrive in Ogden at 8:06pm.

The program takes place inside the Ogden station. The T. H. Bell Junior High School band blasts forth in the echoing structure. Gunn McKay, who rode up the 36 miles from Salt Lake, is enthusiastically greeted. The Mayor of Ogden talks about the importance of railroad jobs. Murray Moler, editor of the Ogden Standard-Examiner (the driving force behind the 1969 Promontory Celebration) says he's glad that Ogden is now Junction City, USA again, with the missing link in place. Speeches over, the band strikes up again, plays two more tunes, then packs up and leaves. It becomes quiet. Soon, only those of us waiting for train 5 are left.

At 1:00am the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR pulls in, running late. All three trains are now side-by-side in the station: #5, #26, and the new #36. The observation car is switched to #5 to deadhead to Oakland. We board our sleeper and go, but we will be back. By all indications, the opinion is that the DESERT WIND will be very popular indeed.

NEW RAIL SERVICE IN RHODE ISLAND

by Stephen Dunham

A new tourist line on the shores of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island is making a game attempt to revive rail travel on the scenic ex-New Haven Newport Branch. The Old Colony & Newport Railway, operated by the nonprofit Newport County Railroad Foundation, began operations on the 8.4-mile branch in the summer of 1979.

Equipment consists of a Brill 1925-vintage coach-baggage (RPO doodlebug), originally owned by the New York Central, and late of the Wolfeborough Railroad in New Hampshire; and a Brill 1928 trailer for overflow crowds.

When the cars were to be moved south to Newport after they were purchased from the Wolfeborough, Conrail condemned the Sakonnet River Bridge, the only access to the otherwise isolated branch, on the day before the scheduled move, apparently on general principles. The doodlebug and trailer crossed the bridge clandestinely.

As its first operating season draws to a close, the future looks bright for the line. As of October 1979 the OC&N was running two trips a day on weekends from its downtown Newport terminus to Portsmouth RI and return.

What makes the railroad unusual among tourist lines is its bid for regular passengers in addition to joy-riders. The terminus in Portsmouth for most trains is Cory's Lane, adjacent to "Green Animals", a garden of sculptured hedges, where a 40-minute stopover is provided. But the trains also make station stops at the marina in Melville and in the Newport Navy Base, where the cars are stored to protect them from vandalism.

The roundtrip I took on an October Saturday saw several passengers boarding and detraining at the marina, and presumably some trips are patronized by military personnel traveling between the Navy Base and downtown Newport. Even the "deadhead" trips between the Base and Newport are included in the published schedules, and intermediate one-way fares of $1 are also listed, as opposed to the standard $3 Newport-Portsmouth roundtrip. Group rates and two-hour charters are also available, and they too are mentioned in the schedule.

The ambitions of the Foundation include a 12-mile extension of service beyond Portsmouth to Battleship Cove in Fall River MA, a popular tourist attraction where three retired Navy ships are open to the public, one of them the battleship Massachesetts; and a steam locomotive to pull its three P-70 ex-PRR coaches, now stored on the Navy Base.

New service and steam locomotion, if the plans come to fruition, will surely make the OC&N a permanent fixture in Newport.

ABOARD THE FIRST ELECTRIC LAKE SHORE

by Peter Putnam Bretz

Due to being in the right place at the right time, I was fortunate enough to be aboard Amtrak's first all-electric LAKE SHORE LIMITED on Oct 15 (the first westbound all-electric was on Oct 16).

I rode from Chicago to Boston in sleeper 2992 "Pine Peak". Ahead of this car were five newly-converted coaches from Union Pacific's 1960-65 order. The brown interior hues were most restful. The diner was 8500 (ex-CZ "Silver Diner"). The New York sleeper was 2900 "Pacific Forest", and slumbercoach 2051.

The diner was the highlight of the train--a splendid refurbishing job. Beech Grove should be proud. Having seen the kitchen mockups last July, I was prepared only slightly for the gleaming work areas, complete lack of smoke, and cleanliness. The design allows passengers to see into the kitchen. The booth seating is very pleasing and comfortable, as are the soft brown and beige colors. Even the table cloths and linen service reflect this, as well as new china and stainless steel cutlery. I believe this is the most impressive refurbishing job Amtrak has yet done. Even tho the car is 31 years old, it seemed new, and would satisfy discriminating tastes.

The dining car steward, Henry Hartsfield, was excellent, and his crew did a superb job. Due to the new electrification it was possible to announce thru the train the "first call to dinner."

A significant problem was the lack of a lounge car, and four tables in the diner were given over to lounge space. An Amdinette slated for use had reportedly developed some problems. I did see one heading west next day on the Boston section.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S APPROPRIATIONS BILL, as we go to press, has been passed by both the House and Senate, and conferees from the two are to meet to iron out a final bill. This bill actually gives Amtrak the money that was approved in the authorization bill completed on Sep 27. That was the legislation that doomed the "hit list" trains but gave Amtrak more money and stability than it's ever had. The final court action on the suits to stop the cutbacks of the FLORIDIAN, LONE STAR, and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA came on Nov 5 when the Supreme Court refused to reconsider the decision of one Supreme Court judge in letting the discontinuances proceed. Suits had been brought by Kansas, Minnesota, and the city of Nashville.....

EDWARD L. ULMAN, former Amtrak Board member who died in office, will be commemorated by the naming of a Superliner sleeping car for him and placement of a plaque in the Seattle station. Amtrak's next Board meeting will be in Seattle on Nov 28--an unusual out-of-Washington DC occasion--and the ceremony will take place then. A name plaque will be placed on the exterior of the new car. Generally, tho, Superliner sleepers will not be named, Amtrak said. Following the meeting, some Board members will ride the eastbound EMPIRE BUILDER, on Nov 29.....

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AN IMPROVED LEXAN-type material for train windows may be used by Amtrak. The Oct 1 issue of Chemical Engineering News reports that General Electric's "Margard" has been specified by Amtrak for new passenger car side windows. Amtrak was not immediately able to confirm the report. Margard is said to be four to five times more resistant to scratching than Lexan because of a silicone coating which is bonded to the material in a new way to resist removal. Its cost is three times that of tempered glass. This could result in clearer windows for train riders.....

THE PEORIA TRAIN and the HOOSIER STATE, the new Chicago-Indianapolis train, have not yet begun operation, and no dates have been set for startup. Amtrak said it would not sign the Peoria train contract until labor costs had been reduced. The Indianapolis train requires "lots of track work" said an Amtrak spokesman, and it is "still up in the air".....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER got its Superliner cars in revenue service with the runs beginning in Chicago Oct 28 and in Seattle Oct 29. Both trains carried Superliner diner and sleeper. No Superliner lounge cars are available yet. The third consist of the train will be Superliners also, but with an electrified conventional sleeper--the train will not be all-conventional, as reported here last issue. Amtrak officials are pleased with the way Superliner cars withstood the crash in the Oct 12 SHAWNEE accident. RTN has learned that the train was traveling at 58 mph when it collided with the ICG freight train (see last issue). Some sample fares on the EMPIRE BUILDER are: Chicago-Seattle one-way coach $147; roundtrip 40-day excursion $206. Sleeping car fares in addition to coach charges are: $52 single economy room; $59 double economy room; $103 family room; $118 single deluxe room; $206 deluxe double bedroom. Railfans have learned that the handicapped room on Superliner cars can be reserved not more than 24 hours before train departure if it has not been taken by then by a handicapped traveler. The large

room (to be nicknamed the "railfan room"), full-car width on the lower level, can be had at single economy room rates.....

SAN LUIS OBISPO was the scene of a meeting of Citizens for Rail California, the California NARP-affiliate, on Oct 12-14. Attendance was 'way up, at 100. Major speakers included George Gray, chief of Caltrans's Division of Mass Transportation; Amtrak's Arthur Lloyd; J. Michael Morrison, president of IlliNARP; J. P. Jones of the United Transportation Union, and other union leaders. The key resolution coming out of the meeting was that Caltrans be urged to purchase at minimal cost the older steam-heated conventional equipment from Amtrak and electrify it for California use. The next CRC conference is slated for the weekend of Mar 28, 1980, in Sacramento.....

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SOUTHWEST COAST CORRIDOR: House bill HR 5403 is now on the floor for consideration. The bill, introduced Sep 25 by Congressmen Van Deerlin, Patterson and Corman, is directed at reducing Los Angeles-San Diego travel time to one hour, 55 minutes and to extend the corridor north to Oxnard CA. The bill is largely a result of Citizens for Rail California lobbying at local and federal levels, with CRC's Carl Schiermeyer taking most of the credit. The bill would put in place the institutional arrangements to accomplish the corridor upgrading and extension. The UTU's Sacramento representative, J. P. Jones, is deemed amenable to thru-crew arrangements, citing the SAN JOAQUIN as a precedent. Santa Fe and Southern Pacific would be forced to accept physical arrangements to right of way for passenger trains. The bill will require Amtrak to treat the corridor seriously by preparing detailed reports on upgrading of the line. The bill, thru Congressional "horse trading", also holds out hope for other corridors around the country. The bill was announced in Southern California by the three Congressmen riding private car 1509 from San Diego to L.A. on Oct 4.....

WINDFALL OIL PROFITS tax legislation will soon be considered by Senate-House conferees, and on Nov 1 Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco sent the California Congressional delegation a telegram urging them to work toward dedicating a substantial part of any such tax revenues to increase federal aid for public transit. "Since transportation consumes approximately 50% of all petroleum in this country, a transit alternative for those people who cannot (or don't want to) afford higher automobile gasoline prices is a logical use of such revenues", said Caltrans.....

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AMTRAK PRESIDENT BOYD is currently traveling in Japan, examing Japanese track construction..... SUPERLINER TRAINING TRAIN that ran from Chicago to Seattle starting Oct 2 (see RTN 193) was followed in places by a helicopter from which films were taken for later commercials using Superliner equipment. Glacier Park was one of the locations where the train was filmed.....

THE PIONEER ARRIVED at Ogden on Oct 15 17 hours late and was turned there to become train 25..... THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL northbound on Oct 29 and the southbound of Oct 30 were cancelled and passengers bused because of maintenance work on the Fraser River Bridge at New Westminster, B.C. Amtrak sources say the combined southbound PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL/MOUNT RAINIER run between Vancouver and Portland will be short-lived. Complaints are arising from travel agents in B.C. If the schedule is changed, the PI will return to its former schedule, connecting with the STARLIGHT, or will be flip-flopped, leaving Seattle at 8am for Vancouver and returning in the evening.....

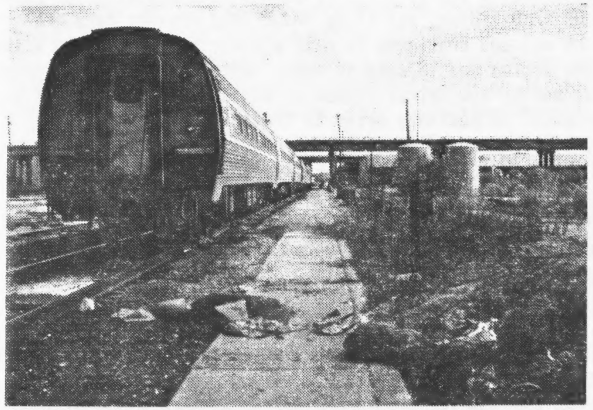
AMTRAK DENIES SELLING any dome cars in good condition, but it is reported that ex-GN dome coach 9461, which received only light body damage in the May EMPIRE BUILDER derailment near Kennewick WA is for sale "as is" at the Pasco BN-yard rip track. Many Amtrak workers privately decry the waste of Amtrak's car disposal program, calling it one of Amtrak's poorest and weakest policy areas at this time...

BEHIND-THE-SCENES moves are continuing, it is reported, to revive the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA within a short period of time. If this move is successful, it is

believed that Oklahoma's Congressional delegation will make a big push to restore the LONE STAR. There has been little heard on political moves to back revival of the FLORIDIAN and the NATIONAL LIMITED.....

THE JANUARY STARTUP of the second SAN JOAQUIN and the seventh SAN DIEGAN could be speeded up to Dec 15 if some Amtrak people have their way--they want to get the new trains running as the heavy holiday season comes up rather than at the winter traffic dropoff when it's over.....

STEPDOWN HI-LEVEL COACH 39916 was one of several such cars hurried thru the electrification conversion program in order to ready it for use on the first EMPIRE BUILDER Superliner run. There was no work on car upholstery or appointments.....



THE SAD STATE of the San Antonio Amtrak station is shown in this photo taken by Alfred E. Ehm. Train 21, the INTER-AMERICAN, running about 2 hours late, is awaiting the dispatcher's permission to head south. The picture indicates a complete lack of shelter, lights, toilet, even paving, for passenger use. A pile of Am-garbage is strewn near the train.

After complaining to Amtrak Board members, and sending some pictures like this, Mr. Ehm noted that some Amtrak officials came into town to look about (ostensibly to put up a shelter at the Medina Street site, the promised trackwork to bring the INTER-AMERICAN into the SP station having been discarded again), and recently Amtrak president Alan Boyd was in town. Sleeping car passengers have to board or detrain at a spot where the pavement has been hazardly dug out.....

MORE AMTRAK ADVERTISING has appeared since the last Amtrak bill was passed, it appears, than at any other single time. We've seen TV commercials here we've never seen before. Amtrak has run a major full-page ad in newspapers all over the U.S. It's headed: "America's Getting into Training" and shows conventional passenger coaches across the top, with passengers of every possible description on the platform. The ad has a lot of text, explaining where Amtrak's at now, and what it's doing to improve service. The text begins: "This year a lot of you got your travel plans into shape the easy way. You sat back in a plush Amtrak seat. And got into training. After a solid year of proposals and counterproposals, hearings and debates--and a summer's worth of energy crises--Congress established guidelines under which trains would be kept. And for the first time gave Amtrak the long-term support we've needed to see those plans through to reality".....

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THE AMTRAK CRESCENT'S consist as Oct 28 is bag-dorm, 4 coaches, lounge, diner, 2 sleepers NY-New Orleans, and one sleeper DC-New Orleans. The sleeper-lounges are gone. The diner and lounge cars will operate into New York, combined with an Amfleet train between NY and Washington each way. On Oct 29 no. 20 arrived in Washington 25mins late, at 8:55am. Passengers were told they could detrain and board #180, the train it combines with, but the CRESCENT would be held until 10:10 am to be combined with train 172--the reason: 15 minutes was not considered enough time to do the switching, so train 180 would be delayed. To complete this story, the combined CRESCENT/train 172 departed 20 minutes late, at 10:30am.....

THE SUNSET LIMITED'S timekeeping has rail observers up in arms. Between New Orleans and Houston, no. 2 has been late an average of 5hrs, 40mins since May 1, reports one record-keeper. On Oct 12 train 2 reached New Orleans at 4:15am; it was due at 8:45pm the previous evening. On Nov 1, train 1 left San Antonio over 6 hours late. On Oct 28 train 2 was there at 8:30am, 3 hours late. An employee said that on Oct 30 train 1 came into East Yard, San Antonio at 8am and was held up there until after 11am. New Orleans sources say the train is being sidetracked by freights between Houston and New Orleans. Accounts from passengers include the following: into siding for an hour as 3 SP freights pass, then return to the main for about 15 miles and into a siding again; train is backed into a siding for passage of freight; train heads into siding, but it is found that freight cars are parked there, so train backs out and continues to next siding; into siding to allow a small freight train of one engine and 10 cars to pass. Amtrak seems to be ignoring the situation. Several months ago Amtrak issued an advisory that delays of 4 to 6 hours east of Houston would be routine, owing to freight train congestion. Amtrak records show a zero on-time record for July and August.....

A WASHINGTON RALLY on Oct 14 to support Gay Rights Awareness Week saw some participants arriving by train. A group of 110 traveled east on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. At Ogden a minister lay across the track in front of the train to protest the group's actions. A description of the trip, dubbed the "Gay Freedom Train", is contained in the Nov issue of Out magazine. Author Jim Austin makes the issue available at $1 plus 54¢ postage; address, 5907 Penn Mall, Room 210, Pittsburgh PA 15206..... RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR'S dome lounge observation car was to be removed from the train about Oct 31 for overhauling. It is expected to be out a few months and the substitute is dome lounge dorm "Silver Shop".....

JUST FOR THE RECORD: President Carter signed the Amtrak authorization bill on Sep 29. It is known as Public Law 96-73.....

TENTATIVE SUPERLINER TIMETABLE has been given by Amtrak: next Feb 1 the SF ZEPHYR should get the new cars; then the DESERT WIND on Mar 1; the PIONEER on Jun 1; the COAST STARLIGHT on Sep 1; the SOUTHWEST LTD on Oct 1, 1980, the SUNSET Nov 1...

OKLAHOMA PASSENGER RAIL ASSOCIATION has been organized by serious rail supporters. Address: 1120 S. 21st St, Chickasha OK 73018. Newsletter is available.....

News in this issue is updated thru November 8, 1979.

FREE BUMPERSTRIPS: Please note that the announcement of free bumperstrips, on page 2, is for NEW subscriptions only--it's a gimmick to get more subscribers. We're sorry that we couldn't possibly send free bumperstrips to all renewing subscribers.

CORRECTION: On page 13 it says that car 100 used on the DESERT WIND was originally the "Imperial Leaf". However, it was actually "Imperial Drive".

CARS & CONSISTS

*Rock Island inspection train of facilities around Kansas City, due to lv K.C. Union Station 7:30am Nov 3 for K.C. tour & due in Topeka by 5pm via UP: engine Kansas City Terminal 71 switcher; car ATSF 89 track inspection car.

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, last eastbd conventional consist, Pasco WA Oct 27: engines 234, 250, heater car 672; cars 1181, 4552, 9454 "Silver Rifle" (running backwards), 4891, 4540, 3254 "City of Chicago", 8068, 2670 "Silver Terrain", 2671 "Silver Plateau", 2662 "Silver Prairie", DOT track cars T-4, T-2. Same, first Superliner eastbd consist, Oct 29: engines 241, 243; cars 1259 baggage, 39916 (ex-Santa Fe stepdown coach), Superliner coaches 34037, 34035, Superliner diner 38004, Superliner sleeper 32002.

*UP Steam Special, Denver Oct 13: engine 8444 (4-8-4); cars 5716, 5474, 5480, 5475, 5472, 5473, lounge 6203, 5484, 5483, 5482, 5486, dome 7006 (all UP equip.).

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Oct 19: engines SP8927, Atk 535 & 642; cars 1239, 2261 "Placid Harbor", 4530, 4508, 4856, dome 9480, 4532, 4534, dome 9471, dome 9352, 8024, 2607 "Pacific Cove", 2651 "Silver Shore".

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 449, first all-electric LSL from Boston, Oct 16: engine 288; cars 1154, Amdinette 20224, 4615, 4608, 2932 "Pacific Shore". Same Springfield MA Oct 18: engines 296, 291; cars 1218, 20224, 4613, 4618, 2981 "Pine Crest", 20006 deadhead.

*ADIRONDACK SPECIAL, inaugurating return of psgr service on ex-NYC branch Utica-Lake Placid, Utica NY Oct 9: engines Adirondack 29, D&H 4075 (RS-3's); cars 2 Adirondack coaches, Adir. lounge, Adir. 1st class coach, Atk 6805 coach, Adir. parlor-cafe, D&H business car 100.

*Amtrak special VOTE YES EXPRESS, Syracuse-Niagara Falls NY to publicize NY transportation bond issue, Syracuse Oct 30: engine 297; cars 21090, 21243, Amdinette 20223, Lehigh Valley business car 353.

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 22/24, Little Rock Oct 24: engines 318, 286; cars 1353, 2991 "Beatrice V. MacDonald", deadhead 21049 on at St. Louis, (to Houston: 20213 Amdinette, 21881), (to Laredo: 21888, 20029 Amdinette), deadheads on at St. Louis: 20220, 21849.

*ANN RUTLEDGE, train 301, Alton IL Oct 24: engines 231, 327; cars 20219 Amdinette, 21238, 21200, deadhead to St. Louis: 21170.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Oct 28: engines ATSF 5102 (off at KC), Atk 512 (on at KC from #3), Atk 511 & 531; cars dome 9480 deadhead, 8102 deadhd, 1036, 1091, 9990, 9918, 9934, 9970, 9984, 9936, 2236 "Elberton", 2265 "Placid Scene", 2661 "Silver Plain". 5½ hrs late due to engine failure.

*LE SAINT-LAURENT, VIA train 18, first run, St. Lambert, Que., Oct 28: engine VIA 6537 (FP9A); steam car VIA 15423; cars VIA 9616 bag, coach VIA 5618, Skyline dome coach VIA 515, coach VIA 5583.

*ATLANTIC, VIA train 12, first eastbd run via CN-CP-CN, St. Lambert Oct 28: engines VIA 6784 (FPA4), 6635 (FB9); cars 9645 bag, coaches 5595, 5489, coach-lounge 3033, Dayniter 5700, diner 1374, sleepers "Cape Tourmentine", "Greenbush", "Greenway", "Kakabeka Falls".

RAIL FANTRIPS

Dec 1-2: Sierra RR & Gold Country Excursion, incl dinner trip on Supper Chief, overnite on Pullman at Jamestown, & visit to West Side & Cherry Valley Railway. $85. BAERA c/o Neil Lang, 555 Jean #532, Oakland CA 94610. (415) 653-9691.

Dec 8: Special group lvs NY, GCT, for visit to Branford Trolley Museum, Valley RR & dinner at Anderson's Angus Corral. 13 hrs for $33.50 all-inclusive. RR Enthusiasts NY Division, Box A-1353, G.C. Sta., NY NY 10017 for flyer or tickets.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept., PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

INARP has offered to help form America's first deaf Rail Travel Club. So if you are deaf, or know someone who is deaf, someone who likes passenger trains and travel, please write: Iowa-Nebraska Association of Railroad Passengers Post Office Box 3182, Omaha, Nebraska 68103.

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50 Different Railroad Postcards $4.50, 100 different $7.95 postpaid. Joseph Lajoie, 22 Stevens Street, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

AMTRAK SLIDES: RTN reader wishes to trade color slides of Western Amtrak trains for Eastern Amtrak trains. Can trade slides of SAN DIEGANS, COAST STARLIGHT and SOUTHWEST LIMITED in various locations. Interested in non-Amfleet Eastern trains. Mark Johnston, 420 N. Sunnyslope Ave, Pasadena CA 91107.

TROLLEY TRAILS THROUGH THE WEST, Vol. 7 - Northern California $4.00. Back issues $3 each. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Brothers Publications, Box 712rtn, Yakima WA 98907.

Dissected, analyzed, unclothed, the NAKED AMTRAK LAW is set forth by none other than the low-cost rail transit catalyst. There in his unofficial 1979 UPDATED AMTRAK LAW, stand MONTREALER, NATIONAL LIMITED, SHENANDOAH, CARDINAL, FLORIDIAN, LONE STAR, PIONEER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, DESERT WIND, to stun Amtrak, to shock the Congress at this mirror-view by catalyst Robert J. Swan of what they have legislated...as oil production staggers. $10, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801.

50 RR LIST--China-glass-paper-etc, LSASE: Collector-Box 65 Miami FL 33164.

NORTHWEST RAIL IMAGES is not the official train photographer of the 1980 Olympic Games. Nevertheless, we do have a new fall pricelist of reissued and new titles for our duplicate color slide sets, that include Amtrak and pre-Amtrak subjects. 35¢ brings a list and sample slide. NRI, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, OR 97405.

FOR SALE: Official RR Guides: Dec '49, Mar '51, Sep '61. Good condition. Also HO BN passenger train set. Send SSAE, Don Wiles, Box 113, Sanders AZ 86512.

AMTRAK WINDOW/BUMPER STICKERS. 3½x15". Red and blue Amtrak logo on white background, plus "I'd Rather Be Ridin' Amtrak" in bold, black letters. Sent postpaid first class. $1.95 each, $3.70 for two, $5.45 for three. Huge discounts on large quantities. Write: P.B.M., 4412 Idledell, Fort Worth TX 76116.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM: Fall 1979 VIA timetable, withdrawn as soon as published due to errors, changes. For envelope with this & other fliers, write T2000 Membership Services, Box 300, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 8V3, encl. $1 for postage and handling.

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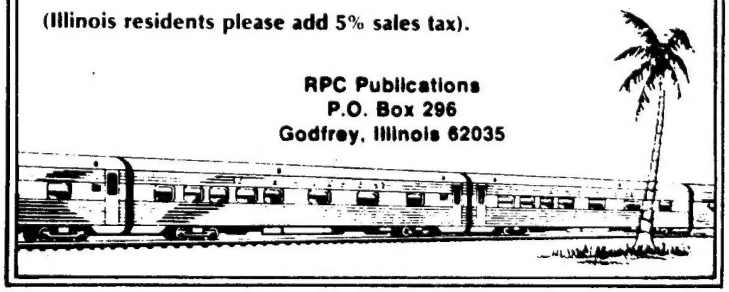
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